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FBI Chief: 3 in Media Supply Data

By FREDERICK BURGER
Herald Staff Writer

The FBI is using three members of the "media" to supply information about continuing criminal investigations in the United States, FBI Director William Webster said Thursday in Palm Beach.

"There are three people in the media who supply us with information," said Webster, who added that all of them had volunteered to do so.

"There are only a few of them," Webster said. "And they serve only a limited function."

He declined to identify the people as "reporters," but said they work in "journalism, radio and television." He said those persons are "in a position to supply ongoing information" to the FBI and, Webster continued, he doubts the superiors of these "volunteers" know of the activities.

The FBI chief offered no additional explanations.

Webster made the remarks during a joint appearance before the Palm Beach Roundtable with CIA Director Stansfield Turner. The CIA director told Congress recently that the CIA had, on three prior occasions, made exceptions to its ban on using journalists to gather intelligence. In those cases, he said, the exceptions had been granted, but the agency never actually used the journalists.

Nevertheless, Turner said Thursday: "We reserve the right to have a relationship with the American media under extraordinary circumstances."

CIA officials have said in the past that these circumstances could include using reporters to make approaches to government officials who could not be approached by U.S. businessmen or embassy employees — the only CIA "cover" jobs not covered by regulations.

Turner said the CIA is "very sensitive" to objections that it uses reporters to gather intelligence information.